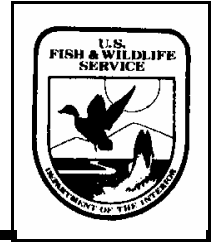


News U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



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2005 Nesting Season

The following update is a summary for the 2005 nesting season at Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge. The data within this summary is current as of 30 September 2005. The information is subject to change as the data is reviewed and finalized. Please contact the refuge for up-to-date information.

- A total of 19 pairs of federally threatened piping plovers nested on the refuge: 1 pair on North Monomoy and 18 pairs on South Monomoy. Refuge-wide, this is 8 less pairs than in 2004. This decrease in nesting pairs is likely due to the loss of habitat and erosion during winter storms and spring Nor'easters, in addition to the constant shifting of sand and ever-changing coastal dynamics. Thirteen chicks fledged and overall reproductive success was fairly poor - 0.68 chicks/pair.
- A total of 8,834 common terns nested on the north tip of South Monomoy Island this season, which is a slight decrease from 8,864 pairs in 2004. The reproductive success in 2005 was fairly good with 1.44 chicks fledged per nest. Approximately, 913 pairs of common terns nested on Minimoy with good productivity. A small group of terns also nested on North Monomoy - 8 pairs. Monomoy NWR hosts half of the tern population in Massachusetts and is the largest common tern colony on the Atlantic coast.
- A total of 27 pairs of federally endangered roseate terns nested on the refuge. One pair nested on South Monomoy Island and produced two chicks, which unfortunately disappeared prior to reaching successful fledgling age. The chicks were likely depredated by gulls or Black-crowned Night-Heron, which were observed frequently in the vicinity of the nesting area. Twenty-six pairs of roseate terns nested on Minimoy, successfully fledging 20 chicks with fair reproductive success - 0.87 chicks/nest. Twenty-seven pairs of roseate terns also nested on the refuge in 2004.
- Laughing gull numbers decreased slightly to 1,312 pairs in 2005 from 1,322 pairs in 2004. Overall, productivity was estimated to be poor. Nest destruction efforts were implemented this season to reduce the increasing Laughing Gull population that is encroaching on the common and roseate tern colony.
- A total of 132 pairs of Least Terns nested on the refuge. Ninety-three nests were counted on

the south tip and southeastern tip of South Monomoy Island in mid June. An additional 39 nests were counted on the southwest tip of South Monomoy in mid July. Productivity was low primarily due to predation by coyotes and gulls. Some nests were also lost to overwash during very high tides.

- Black-crowned Night-Heron decreased from 200 pairs in 2004 to 174 pairs in 2005. One hundred sixty-seven pairs nested on South Monomoy. Seven pairs of Black-crowned Night Heron also nested on North Monomoy. In addition, 10 pairs of Snowy Egret nested on the refuge in 2005, along with 2 pairs of Great Egret.
- Five pairs of Black Skimmers nested on Minimoy in 2005. Reproductive success was poor (0.40 chicks/pair) with only 2 fledged chicks. One of the 5 pairs from Minimoy renested on South Monomoy in mid July. Three chicks hatched from the nest in early August, but did not survive to fledgling age. Monomoy was again the only nesting site in Massachusetts for this species.
- A total of 29 pairs of American Oystercatcher nested on the refuge: 11 pairs on North Monomoy, 11 pairs on South Monomoy, and 7 pairs on Minimoy. Unfortunately, only 1 chick fledged successfully and overall reproductive success was very poor - 0.03 chick/ pair. Poor productivity was due primarily to overwash of nests from spring Nor'easters and predation of eggs and chicks by coyotes and gulls. Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge remains one of the most important nesting and staging sites in Massachusetts for this species. American oystercatcher banding efforts continued on the refuge; 7 adults and 1 chick were banded to obtain information on habitat use, movement patterns, and family group dynamics.

Threatened Beetles find a New Home at Monomoy

Monomoy has been targeted as an introduction site for the federally threatened Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle since 2000. In 2005, tiger beetle larvae were not translocated to Monomoy from the source beach at Martha's Vineyard. However, adult beetle monitoring was conducted in July and August, with a total of 16 adult beetles being sighted and marked. We hope to continue the project in 2006 and to establish a satellite population for the successful recovery of this species.

Horseshoe Crab Work Continues

This was the fifth year of conducting horseshoe crab surveys on North Monomoy Island. The refuge is one of the most important spawning areas in the state for horseshoe crabs. In addition to censusing horseshoe crabs, approximately 593 crabs were tagged this season for the purpose of examining horseshoe crab movement patterns and obtaining recapture information. Tagged horseshoe crab sightings can be reported to the refuge Horseshoe Crab Hotline at (508) 945-0594 ext. 12. The census and tagging information from Monomoy will be combined with results gathered by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and the Cape Cod National Seashore to help establish baseline data for the refuge and surrounding waters.

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